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CIVIC & NATIONAL IDEALS

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BY
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PREFACE

Sister Nivedita has left all her writings for the furtherance of the cause of the education of Indian women. In order to make them available to the public, it is intended to publish them in a series of volumes both those which are unpublished and those which cannot be had in book form. This volume is the first of the series. It will be followed by others, the second being more or less connected with education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. The Civic Ideal 1

II. Civic Elements in Indian Life . . 15

III. The Modern Epoch and the National Idea 23

IV. Unity of Life and Type in India . 34

V. The Indian National Congress . . 49

VI. The Principle of Nationality . . 57

VII. The Function of Art in Shaping Nationality 62

VIII. The Message of Art 83

IX. Indian Sculpture 95

X. The Indian Painting 109

XI. Shah Jahan Dreaming of the Taj . 118

XII. The Passing of Shah Jahan . . 120

XIII. Sati 124

Civic and National Ideals

THE CIVIC IDEAL

Cities are the schools of nationality, even as a nation is made up of all its citizens. It is in the service of the small unit that the power to become a critical factor in the larger is for the most part won ; by that knighthood which is the guerdon of civic contest that souls fearless and unstained are selected for the leading of a nation's advance. In the history of no people, at any period in its development, has there ever been time to spare for one wasted life. Such a life immediately becomes parasitic upon Humanity, and thereby detracts from that energy on which there are but too many other calls. The fact that in the modern world whole classes of people fail to recognise this fact, shows only that we have not yet any adequate idea either of the demands to be made on the individual by a perfect civic life, or of the problems that await solution by the energy of such life. It would only be, indeed, by the finest possible development of every man, woman, and child in a whole country that such an ideal could be manifest, and this is a spectacle which the world has never yet seen.

The Indian prince, idling in a motor, or following the fashions of a society which neither he nor his have initiated or can control; the American millionaire, spending outside his country the sums concentrated in it by the organisation of *sudra*-labour; and the European aristocrat, absorbing into his own interest all the privileges of all classes, in every place and society; all these appear equally unsuspicious of the fact that Humanity has a right to make any higher claim on a man than that of the fulfilment of his own selfish caprice. Yet there are in the world at any given moment so many evils that might be removed, so many sorrows that might be mitigated, so many tasks that need not be left undone, that if all of us were to respond in the highest degree to the greater exactions of the race, the progress made would only very slowly become apparent! Verily, in all eternity there is not room for one moment of viciousness, of weakness, of idleness, nor amongst all the nations of men, for one human parasite!

In India at the present moment, we are learning, however slowly, to decipher the new laws that are to dominate and evolve our great future. As a community, our task, up to the present, has been to maintain all that we could of the past. Suddenly, however, all this is at an end. We have entered upon an era of formulation of the new. 'By the past, through the present, to the future!' says Auguste Comte. That is to say, it is by the scrutiny and understanding of the past, and by taking advantage of the power it has accumulated in us, that we become able so to direct our own action as to create for ourselves and others the loftiest future. The yet-to-be is as a vast unexplored territory of which we are charged to take possession. That age which is discovering nothing new, is already an age of incipient death. That philosophy which only recapitulates the known, is in fact a philosophy of ignorance. It is because in our country to-day great thoughts are being born, because new duties are arising, because fresh and undreamt of applications are being made of the ancient culture, that we can believe the dawning centuries to be for us. If the Indian mind had not been giving daily promise of extended conquests, if it had not been feeling out constantly towards a new dimension, we could have hoped nothing for ourselves. But it is doing these things. The mind of our civilisation is awake once more, and we know that the long ages of theocratic development are perfected, while before us lies the task of actualising those mighty ideals of the civic and national life by which the theocratic achievments of our fathers are to be protected and conserved. We are now to go out, as it were, into the waste spaces about our life, and build there those towers and bastions of self-organisation and mutual aid, by which we are yet to become competent to deal with the modern world and all its forces of aggression. The bricks lie there, in abundance, for our work. The elements abound, in our history, our literature, our traditions, and our customs, by which we can make of ourselves a strong and co-herent people. It needs only that we understand our own purpose, and the method of its accomplishment. As the architect builds to a plan, so is a nation fashioned by its own dreams. And he who knows this, knows also how to use his power of dreaming. The very doctrine, that everything in life is the work of desire, would teach us this. For it follows as an inevitable inference that the world is changed by those who best know how and what to desire. It may even be, after all, that there is no castle in the world so formidable as a well-built 'castle in the air'!

But the elements of nationality are civic and to these civic components it is that the individual stands most directly and most permanently related. The man who would not stir a finger to help his village to the recovery of grazing-rights is not the man to bleed and die in the country's cause. The man who will not suffer some slight risk and discomfort for national good, is not the man to whom to entrust the banner of an army. By civic duty we are tested for national responsibility. By the widening of the smaller accomplishment, we immeasurably extend the possibilities of the larger. It might be said, however, that we have at the moment but little idea of what is meant by the civic life or the civic ideal. This is true; nevertheless we have but to give the words our close attention, and undoubtedly the day will come, when, for our love and faith in them, we shall be ready to die.

Of our two great epics it may be said that while the pervading interests of the Mahabharata are heroic and national, those of the Ramayana are mainly personal and civic. It is more than likely, indeed, that Valmiki's poem sprang out of a deliberate wish to glorify the beloved city of Ayodhya by painting the mythic history of its earliest sovereigns. The city, and everything in it, fills the poet with delight. He spends himself in descriptions of its beauty on great festivals. He loses himself in the thought of its palaces, its arches, and its towers. But it is when he comes to paint Lanka, that we reap the finest fruit of that civic sense which Ayodhya has developed in him. There is nothing, in all Indian literature, of greater significance for the modern Indian mind, than the scene in which Hanuman contends in the darkness with the woman who guards the gates, saying, in muffled tones, "I am the city of Lanka."

We have here what is the fundamental need of the civic spirit, that we should think of our city as a being, a personality, sacred, beautiful, and beloved. This, to Rama and his people, was Ayodhya. This, to Ravana and his, was Lanka. And Valmiki could look with both their eyes, for he, in common with all the men of his great age, was in the habit of relating himself instinctively to his home, his sovereign, and his group.

Even in European languages, the power of clear statement with regard to such subjects as we are now discussing, is very unequally developed. In English, for instance, there is no single word to connote the civic community, the human equivalent of the city, that corporate life that has built for itself, on the chosen spot, in accordance with its own ideals and aspirations, the home we see. The French word *commune* bears the sense we seek to convey, but it may seem to some of us too deeply tinged with political and historical associations. It may be—who knows ?—that in some Indian language will first be formed the audible symbol to express the human and social aspect of the civic unit in its purity. Certain it is, that when the thing begins to be apprehended, the word will be created. Great movements fashion their own men, and ideas make their own language.

The city as a whole is but a visible symbol of this life behind it. Nor does this mean only of the life *at present* behind it. It is determined by the sum of the energy of all its creators, past as well as present. There is even, in a sense, an ideal city, in which the labours of all future builders have to be taken into account. Why is Lucknow different from Calcutta, Bombay from Benares, Delhi from Ahmedabad ? Looking for the answer to such a question, do we not perceive, finally and conclusively, that the seen is but the sign and symbol of the unseen, that the material is but the masks of the spiritual, that things are but the precipitate of thought ? Why is Paris or Rome so different from Amritsar ? The history of ages and continents lies in the answer to that question. The highest visible symbol of human aspiration may perhaps be an altar. The most perfect visible symbol of our unity is undoubtedly a city.

The city is something more than the aggregate of the homes that compose it. These homes are themselves grouped according to a certain pattern, in observance of unwritten laws of order. Houses and gardens scattered at random would promise but a short future to the space of ground on which they stood. Peoples may differ widely in the degree of their civic development, the magnificence of their public buildings and the like, but in the orderly evolution of a single street or lane, we have the tacit admission of the presence of the guardian spirit of cities, and the promise of her future benediction, should it be invoked. Beyond this, there may be beauty of design. In Paris, almost every great roadway ends in a large space of lamps and gardens which forms in itself the centre of a star; and almost every avenue, forming its ray-like vistas, leads to some prominent building or memorial. So, as we stand in the Place de la Concorde we look up the great roadway of the Champs Elysees to the Napoleonic Arc de Triomphe, where it crowns the gentle elevation in the distance. Or so, from the gilded statue of Joan of Arc, we may look into the Place de la Concorde itself, with its obelisk and its statues, and the watching circle of cities. Scholars say that only a hunting people,—accustomed to scan many of the forest-glades for the quarry from a single centre, would express themselves naturally in so stellate a design. And certainly in the Indian Jeypore, we have the rectangular plan of the rice-fields reproduced, with their intersecting paths.

But, however this be, it is clear that as the city is more than an aggregate of private homes, so the commune represents a grouping that transcends the family in complexity and importance. The past, present and future of the family are bound up in its caste and occupation ; but the commune may embrace all castes ; transcends all. It seeks amongst all alike for its sons, its lovers, its servants. It imposes no restriction of destiny or birth. The scavenger who serves well the civic ideal of cleanliness is a better citizen than a Brahman, if the latter serves only himself. Not caste alone, but also the church, is to be forgotten for the city. Hindu and Mohammedan in this relationship are on one footing. Not only differences of religion, but those also of race, of language, of age, and of sex, are to be lost in unity of citizenship. All these elements of diversity are but so much fuel for the fire of joy amongst brethren. The reader of Scott's "Anne of Geirstein" will realize that there is no nationality in Europe stronger than that of Switzerland. Yet this tiny country is divided between three languages and two religions! The pariah village is as precious to the southern town, as the temple close with its rows of Brahman houses. The school, the university, and the playground for the babies, are everywhere as essential as the council of the elders. The Mohammedan peasant is every whit as dear to *Bhumia Devi*, the Goddess of the Homestead, as the Hindu workman. All Humanity is necessary to the heart of

Humanity, every single soul of us to the great whole ; and best of all in the complexity of the civic unity, is the individual mind enabled to grasp this fact. What we call public spirit is simply the reflex in a given personality of the civic consciousness. That is to say, public spirit is the expression of that character which is born of constantly placing the ego, with the same intensity as in the family, in a more complex group. There thus come into being new duties and new responsibilities, and the ideal of civic integrity towers above all the lower and more private achievements of the kindred, or the clan.

What, then, is the fundamental bond that welds so many many and various elements into the single, communal personality ? Does it not lie in the equal relation of each of these to the common home ? There is no motive in life like the love of the dwelling-place. The spot on which a city stands is in truth a great hearth-place of human love, a veritable altar of spiritual fire. Guarded by a rude rock, on the slopes overlooking the sea, stood Athens. Nestling in a cup amongst her seven hills lies Rome.

Nestled about her islands, they built Paris on the Seine. But of what dreams, what poetry, what prayer, what love and triumph did not each of these become the centre! The gods themselves were pictured, fighting for the chosen soil. Pallas Athene guarded Athens. Rome thought of herself as the eternal city. And in Paris, only the other day, the hand of Puvis de Chavannes has painted for us the beautiful legend of St. Genevieve, and we learn that deep in its own heart the most modern and worldly of cities cherishes the faith that in high heaven, amongst the saints is one who intercedes for it!

But why travel so far afield for instances of the idealising of the abode? What of Benares, built about the Vedic hearth, that to-day is the golden grating of Visveshvar? What of Allahabad, with her thousands of pilgrims, bathing in the sacred waters of the Ganga-Jumna? What of Chitore, with her cathedral-church of Kalika,—Kangra-Rani, Queen of the Battlements? What of Calcutta, where appears Nakuleshwar, as guardian of the ghat of Kali? From end to end of the peopled earth, we shall find, wherever we look, that man makes his home of a surpassing sanctity to himself and others, and the divine mingles with the domestic fire on every hearth.

CIVIC ELEMENTS IN INDIAN LIFE

The essential condition for the development of a strong civic spirit lies in the maintenance of the communal life and consciousness, and this condition is fulfilled nowhere else in the world as it is in oriental countries. This is to a certain extent the result of climate. Life, in the clear air and under the cloudless skies of India, is necessarily passed much in the open air. That the street is a kind of club, the very architecture, with its verandahs and stone couches, bears mute witness. The family-homes stand ranged behind the great open-air *salon*,* like a row of convent-cells, for the stricter members of the choir. Sometimes there are added evidences of the larger social grouping visible to the eye. Bhubaneswar has its great tree in the midst of the parting of three roads, and at any hour one may see there knots of talkers of one sort or another, seated at ease beneath it. Conjeeveram is like a city out of the old Greek or Assyrian world, so wide is the roadway that leads to the temple entrance, and so splendid the arch that spans it just before, eloquent, both, of communal worship and rejoicing. Nor are women in India altogether without their civic centres and gathering-places; though these are necessarily concerned chiefly with the bathing-ghat, the temple, and the well.

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* *Salon*—French for drawing-room, *baithak-khana.*

Such meetings, however, of the inhabitants of a single street, or the members of either sex, amongst themselves, are not in strictness re-unions of the highest civic order. They serve indeed to keep before the mind of each member of the community that social unit which transcends the family. But that unit is still simplified by adhesion to a single religious doctrine or a single body of custom. It is thus communal or parochial,* rather than civic. It is after all, intellectually speaking, but as an assembly within the village. Now a city is made up of men and families from a thousand villages, and they are by no means of one faith alone, or even of one nationality. How complex is the typical city, we may be better able to judge, if we recall for a moment some of its more primitive examples. They stand always, as Kropotkin points out, at the crossings of the great highways. To see this, we have only to look at Benares, at Allahabad, at Babylon. To this day, all the railroads in India centre at Delhi.

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* How instructive is the comparison between the English word *parish* and the Bengali *para* !

The ideal city, then, is the meeting-place of shepherd and peasant, of merchant and artificer, of priest and pilgrim, of court and camp. It is the centre towards which converge streams that rise in all the quarters of the globe. It is a market-place and an exchange, a focus of wealth and industry, a hall of international council, and the quadrangle of a world-university. Babylon,—set on the great river that flows north and south, midway between Persepolis and Thebes, with her highways running to Damascus and Baalbek, to Arabia, and even to distant China,—forms a supreme example of the civic complexity. But Taxila must once have curiously resembled her, and ancient Thaneswar, and glorious Pataliputra.

The fractional unit, then, is not the civic unity. The "quarter" is not the city. Yet it is, as we know it in India, a marvellously enduring fragment of an old-time unity, which carries with it, if we have eyes to read, a code of civic honour and a habit of civic fraternity. The village is a larger family, and a smaller city, and nothing can be more significant than the forms which its communal activity takes in India. The portion of the field that belonged to the Brahman was tilled for him. The widow's digging was done by her neighbours. The schoolmaster and his wife were maintained by gifts. It is learning, we note, and the spiritual power, for whose maintenance the community concentrates its energy. To this day, there is no village in India, however poor, that will ask a stranger to visit it, in the capacity of teacher or thinker, without paying every expense of conveyance to and fro, in addition to the outlay incidental to the presence of a visitor. We have here the evidence of a vast civic culture, deeply rooted in historic habits.

The same truth is impressed upon us in

another way, by the ease with which Indian towns exert themselves to show civic hospitality. Here we have substantial earnest of the readiness to enter into larger organisation. There is no Hindu township that would present an address of welcome to a distinguished guest without the inclusion of Mohammedan names. Similarly, the Mohammedan district will make no representative deputation unless the Hindu residents of good standing are also to be found upon it. India is supposed to be sectarian, but no one ever heard of the members of one sect trying to exclude those of another from collective action! In such mutual courtesy and recognition, we have the largest possible basis for civic self-realisation of the highest order. It is by the study and understanding of our own cities, and their institutions, it must be remembered, that we shall be able to develop and build up our civic sense.

It has been said that the whole demand of citizenship lies in the claim that all the work of the city should be done by the people of the city. This is, as I cannot help thinking, but a defective summary of the duties of citizens.

Surely they ought to rejoice together ! Unless they meet now and then indeed with conscious thought of the one bond that securely unites them, amidst all their apparent diversities, the very spirit of citizenship will be likely to depart altogether, and leave them sundered. And this thought of kinship must be expressed in festivity. It has ever been in the history of man, that the realising of social unity found expression in joy.

This is the feeling that speaks in every triumphal arch that ends a village-road, and crowns a bathing-ghat, on the banks of the Ganges. This is the feeling that our fathers knew, when they instituted the practice of procession. Over and over again, in the Rig-Veda, the earth is referred to as " the sacrifice " round which the path of light makes a priestly circle, in the course of the year. It is one of the most beautiful and vigorous of similies. That of Auguste Comte which may be freely translated "The Earth itself is but the largest image, and space about it the infinite altar," sounds almost like an echo of the Vedic metaphor. But it reminds us of the beautiful procession of the images which are so characteristic a feature of life in Indian towns. As the light encircles the earth, so verily do these ceremonial pilgrimages girdle our boroughs and villages, nay, it is not only the worshipper of Sarasvati or the commemorator of the Mohurrum, who makes the circumambulation of the communal home. The whole Indian idea of enjoyment is communal, and even at a marriage, processions form the typical delight.

Let us not forget that at the heart of the circle lies the sacred object. Already there are rising amongst us, hereafter to be multiplied in number and deepened in significance, those other processions, symbolic of the idea of city and nationality. Already it is no uncommon thing to see the streets and lanes of a Hindu town filled with its singing boys who, carrying banners and instruments, are chanting prayers to no god or goddess, but intoning the sacred address to the Motherland. Let us all remember as we watch them, that the city about which they march is the symbol of the nationality, that in her is the throne of the Mother Herself. The future will see more and more of these hymns and poems of place. It was a Mahommedan who composed that Ascription to the Ganges that every Hindu child in Bengal learns in babyhood. In doing so, he was the forerunner of a new era in literature. Even now we are only on the threshold of that great age. But many who are young to-day will not have grown old before these things shall come to pass. To Indian hearts, Hindu and Mahommedan alike, high caste and lowly-born, woman and man, there will be no symbol so holy as, firstly, their mother-land, and secondly, their city. The civic life will offer a conception as clear as that of family and home. The duties of citizenship will seem not less precious than those of *jati* and *samaj*. And the worship of place and sense of civic honour, dignity, and happiness will bear their flowers in each individual soul.

THE MODERN EPOCH AND THE NATIONAL IDEA

The mind of India may to-day be held to have understood that the most important problem before it is the creation of a national idea. For this, there must be the awakening of a sense of history. But we must carefully distinguish between such an awakening, and the process of collecting *materials for history*. India is full of such material, just as she is overflowing with the elements of a powerful national feeling. But the one is not the other. A congeries of fragments, however vast, can not constitute a whole. Long strings of words do not make a dictionary. And facts, archæological, sociological and economic, are not sufficient to stand in the place of history, however essential they may be to its construction.

What is required for the manifestation of a strong conscious national life ? Is love of place, pride of birth, or confidence in past culture all sufficient? Neither any, nor yet all, of these can ever be enough. In addition there must be the irresistible mind of co-ordination, the instinct of co-operation, the tight-knit discipline of a great brotherhood. Similarly in the making of history, it is the guiding ideas which are more important than the massing of correct detail. We shall become great historians, great singers of the song of a people's evolution, not merely in proportion as we are competent to adjudicate correctly the date of king or battle, but rather as we are able to reveal the essential features of the past and gather from them the prophecy of the future.

All histories, whether of communities or periods, have their central laws, without the recognition of which they are chaotic. Here we seek the story of the municipal ideal. Again we sit at the feet of a slowly evolving church. Now it is the idea of national, again of religious freedom. Without these dominant, what would Flanders mean, or Italy, or the Dutch nation, to the human consciousness? What could restore the aroma of the thirteenth century, or the martial promise of the fifteenth, to European life ?

Studying India, then, in the light of the national idea, what are we, similarly, to regard as the guiding laws of her development, the dominating factors of our interpretation ? Are we to believe that she has been, as her enemies declare, always the home of a feeble and ignorant peasantry, given to womanish notions and womanish habits of jealousy and disruption, without power of cohesion or ordered political will, a folk ever prone to extend hospitality to the foes of their own brethren ? If we disbelieve these calumnies, it lies with us to bring counter theories to bear upon the situation. No false belief was ever driven out by mere denial however clamorous. Poor theory must be worsted by good, weak case by strong, falsehood by truth. There is no question as to the side on which conquest lies. Knowledge alone is the condition of victory. It is the greatest fidelity to truth that determines who wins.

Not in history alone, but in history in common with every form of classical learning, Indian criticism has to be redeemed from the elaborate pursuit of trifles. It is common enough to find that the study of the Bhagabad Gita has become mere hair-splitting about a noun here or a preposition there. But this failure to see the forest for the trees cannot in any true sense be considered knowledge of the Gita. The power and habit of making large generalisations has to be recaptured by the Indian mind. And nowhere more so than in dealing with history.

There can be no doubt that the most potent factor in giving power of generalisation is a trained sense of contrast. And in this direction we realize the value of a knowledge of European history, to the mind that would create anew the knowledge of the East. As an explored and formulated idea, having found literary expression, the European is the only history that yet exists. Few things indeed can thrill us more deeply with the greatness of the age that is dawning for India, than to realise even for a moment that her people have before, not behind them, the appropriation of the historical idea, *in its modern form,* with the consequent responsibility of writing, and singing for the first time the Psalm of the Past, the song of the national life. But even European history, in the form in which it reaches India, knows too little of the larger generalisations, too little, concretely and sympathetically, of the broad currents of tendency that underlie all events. Massing of contrasts is the first step towards knowledge; the idea of continuity comes second. Cuvier's doctrine of types precedes Darwin's theory of evolution.

If the massing of contrasts, then, be the process immediately before the student of Indian history, what is the first outstanding phenomenon that he should learn to grasp and define as a whole? Surely a definite and concrete idea of the *Modern Period* ought to be his first achievement. In a dim way the Indian student has known himself all his life, to have been born between colliding worlds. What has hitherto been a vague assumption must now become clear thought. What is the prime distinction of the Modern Period? There was an age when Hindu, Musalman, Christian were radically divergent, not only in religious hope and belief, but far more deeply, in daily habit, in ideas of artistic enjoyment and in the method of social and political outlook. To-day, in proportion as any of these is "modern," so proportionately does he tend to approximate to a certain common type. Many of the sectarian peculiarities of custom tend to disappear. Literary ideals and political aspirations and subjects of interest are shared. The era is one of consolidation.

It is not sufficient to enumerate clearly and distinctly the characteristics and distinguishing phenomena of the modern epoch. We must also be able to analyse the series of events which have brought about this complex result. Why is the age one of consolidation, of internationalism ? Why do France, Germany and England grow more alike and not more unlike day by day ? In what sense may it be said that each finds its culminating type in America ? What is the ideal that dominates everything that is distinctively of the new day, whether it be an army or a manufacturing company or finance or amusement ? What is the almost unconscious aim that drives men to judge of efficiency by numbers ; that makes them travel in herds, with the speed of lightning, in gigantic world-ruts; that causes a constantly growing regimentation of work; an ever increasing elimination of special ability?

What we are content to call internationalism, we clearly owe to rapidity of locomotion, and that rapidity of locomotion to the discovery of the mechanical uses of steam and electricity. The modern epoch is at bottom the mechanical epoch. The machine is its ideal; the exploiting of increasing areas of force, its dream. In constitution and effort it is not so much immoral as un-moral. It does not produce; it avails itself of the production of the past.

And yet the modern epoch has its own point of greatness. It has organised knowledge in science—as it has organised the world of travel. It has organised information, too, in the daily press. By these means, it has to a great extent minimised the power of those priesthoods under which men were wont to groan. True, but at the same time it has made its own priesthoods, of journalists, or at worst, of journalistic censors, ready to enforce their orthodoxy on an ignorant world. The lives of the saints have given place to dictionaries and encyclopaedias, in the formation of libraries, and the change is charged with significance.

What, then, are the ideal requirements of such an age? Evidently an intellectual synthesis, which shall correspond to the external internationalism. Pre-modern epochs made one man Brahmin, another Kayastha and so on. To-day every school-boy must take a bird's eye view of the whole nexus. His own specialism must be self-chosen. So far does the world-consciousness tend to be the unspoken background of the individual life that even the sweetness of home lies much in the sense of the vast without, from which it is a shelter and a refuge.

But the main necessity for visualising the modern epoch lies in the power which thus becomes ours to concretise other periods,—in Europe, the Classical, the Mediaeval and the Renaissance: in India, the Buddhist, the Puranic and Mogul.

India has known two great periods of Nationality, the Buddhist and the Mahommedan. It happens sometimes to the students of ancient texts, to find a manuscript of no rarity written over some older and priceless script,—a copy of Euclid or Virgil for example, deliberately superposed upon an erased gospel. Such a text is called a palimpsest and it is the task of the scholar to decipher the earlier and dimmer of the writings. Similarly is the soil of India an immense palimpsest of the Asokan and Mohammedan empires. In Behar,—the ancient Magadh,—this is especially easy to prove. Here the tamarind tree deliberately replaces the peepul, the tomb of the *pir* is placed on the height of the ancient stupa. The Mahommedan fortress is built on the site of the Asokan capital. It is only when we really grasp this idea thoroughly that we can prepare ourselves for the study of the further question, the extent to which what we call Buddhism has actually influenced India as a whole. From the farthest south to the most distant north, we shall find its memorials here in buildings and relics of various sorts, again in a peculiar style of architecture, and yet elsewhere in names, doctrines, and folklore.

And with all this,—what *was* Buddhism ?

It was no sect, however large, no church, however liberal. It included a religious order. But Buddhism was, in fact, simply Hinduism nationalised, that is to say, Hindu culture plus the democratic idea. Hinduism alone, in its completeness, can never create a nationality, for it then tends to be dominated by the *exclusiveness* of the Brahmin caste, whose *ideal* is naturally and rightfully its central type. Learning and austerity are the characteristic virtues of that ideal. Exclusiveness is its characteristic weakness and vice. It is only, therefore, when there is within Hinduism itself, a counter-centre to the Brahmin, that Hinduism can suffice to create a nationality. This counter-centre was found during the Asokan period in the personality of Buddha, who was a Kshatriya by birth.

After the advent of Mahommedanism even this could no longer be sufficient, so that Akbar and Shah Jehan combining the ethos of Hindu culture with the Islamic idea of the Brotherhood of Man, became the representative figures of the new conception of nationality.

And to-day the last trace of religious and social prejudice is to be swept away, and the idea of nationality itself, pure, radiant and fearlessly secular, is to emerge in triumph, giving meaning and consistency to the whole of the preceding evolution.

This, or such as this, is the thread round which all historical research in India must crystallise, Asoka and Akbar being the organic centres of the national idea in the past. In relation to these, and only in relation, our historical observations can be of value. For as surely as the descent of man is a long story of the gradual dominance of the many parts of the animal body by the specialised human brain, so surely does the history of the corporate life reveal a similar process of the growing co-ordination of parts in an organic whole.

UNITY OF LIFE AND TYPE IN INDIA

Behind and within the unity of humanity there is a stratification of man which is to the full as interesting as the tale of the formation of the sedimentary rocks. To the full as interesting, but not, hitherto, so clearly visualized. Race over race, civilization over civilization, epoch upon epoch, the molten tides of immigration have flowed, tended to commingle, and finally superposed themselves. And systems of thought and manners have grown, by the accreting of the burdens of one wave to those of another, and their blending into a whole, under the action of the genius of place. Behind ancient Egypt, how long and historical a spelling-out of elements there must have been! What a protracted process of adding race-syllable to race-syallable took place, before that brilliant complexus first emerged upon the human mind! Yet there was such a being as an Ancient-Egyptian, recognizable as a specific human unit, in contradistinction to his contemporary, the Phœnician, the Cretan, or the Babylonian. Or the same possibility may be seen in our own day in the fact that there is such a being as a Modern-American, diverse in his origins beyond any type that has ever heretofore appeared, and yet marked by certain common characteristics which distinguish him, in all his sub-divisions, from the English, the Russian, the Italian, who contributed to form him.

These miracles of human unification are the work of *Place*. Man only begins by making his home. His home ends by remaking him. Amongst all the circumstances that go to create that heritage which is to be the opportunity of a people, there is none so determining, so welding, so shaping in its influence, as the factor of the land to which their children shall be native. Spiritually, man is the son of God, but materially, he is the nursling of Earth. Not without reason do we call ourselves children of the soil. The Nile was the mother of the Egyptian. The shores of the Mediterranean made the Phœnician what he was. The Babylonian was the product of river-plain and delta. And the Bengalee is literally the son of Mother-Ganges.

In every case, however, this unity induced by place is multiplied, as it were, by the potentialities of confluent race-elements. Man learns from man. It is only with infinite difficulty, by striving to re-apply our powers in terms of the higher ideals of some new circle, to which we have been admitted, that we raise the deeds of the future above the attainment of the past. Water rises easily enough to the level once reached. How much force must be expended to carry it above this! The treaty successfully imposed on the world by some great statesman, serves only to remind his school-fellows of his old-time triumphs in playingfield or class-room. Many a brilliant general has been known to study his battles with the aid of tin soldiers. The future merely repeats the past, in new combinations, and in relation to changed problems.

Thus we arrive at the fundamental laws of nation-birth. *Any country which is geographically distinct, has the power to become the cradle of a nationality. National unity is* *dependent upon place. The rank of a nation in humanity is determined by the complexity and potentiality of its component parts. What any one of its elements has achieved in the past, the nation may expect to attain, as a whole, in the future. Complexity of elements, when duly subordinated to the nationalising influence of place, is a source of strength, and not weakness to a nation.*

India, at the present moment, in the throes of the passage from Mediæval to Modern, out of a theocratic into the National formation, affords an excellent field for the study of these laws. Many observers—aware that the Indian people to-day are proposing to themselves this transition—see nothing before them but disappointment and defeat. "What"! say they of this school, "Honey-combed as India is by diversity of languages; ridden by the weight of customs that are alike in no two provinces; with a population drawn from races black, yellow, and white, and clinging with jealous persistence to the distinctive individuality of each element; filled with types as different from one another as the Punjabee and the

Bengalee; divided at best into two, by the cleavage between Mahommedan and Hindu; to talk of unity, in this seething variety, is the merest folly! The idea of an Indian Nationality is simple moonshine!" Such opinions, are, in fact, held by most Europeans who have visited or resided in India: they are combined, moreover, with a genuine contempt for all who differ from them. Yet they may not be the only conclusions possible upon the facts, and it is generally granted that sentence is not well pronounced till both sides of a case have been heard.

The question arises then, is there any unity of life and type perceptible amongst the Indian people, which might sooner or later serve as the foundation for a realised Indian Nationality? It is perhaps true that the Bengalee is the Irishman of India; the Mahratta, the Scot; the Punjabee, Welshman or Highlander, as we choose to name him; but is there anything common to all these, and to others, that relates them to one another, as the central fact of Britonhood relates their Western counterparts? On the existence or non-existence of such community of life and type must depend the ultimate reasonableness of Indian National aspirations.

The first treasure of a nation, geographical distinctness, India undeniably possess, in an extraordinary degree. Around her feet the sapphire seas, with snowclad mountain-heights behind her head, she sits enthroned. And the races that inhabit the area thus shut in, stand out, as sharply defined as herself, against the Mongolians of the North-East, and the Semites of the North-West. Within this land, Aryan ideals and concepts dominate those of all other elements. There is a self-organization of thought that precedes external organization, and the accumulation of characteristics in a single line, which this brings about, is what we mean by racial types. In India, the distinctive stock of ideas rises out of her early pre-occupation with great truths. Neither Jain nor Mahommedan admits the authority of the Vedas or the Upanishads, but both are affected by the culture derived from them. Both are marked, as strongly as the Hindu, by a high development of domestic affection, by a delicate range of social observation and criticism and by the conscious admission that the whole of life is to be subordinated to the ethical struggle between inclination and conscience. In other words all the people of India show the result of education, under theocratic systems, for the concern of churches is ever primarily with the heart. When Egypt was building her Pyramids, India was putting a parallel energy into the memorising of the Vedas, and the patient elaboration of the philosophy of the Upanishads. The culture begun so early, has proceeded to the present day without a break, holding its own on its own ground and saturating Indian society with a standard of thought and feeling, far in advance of those common in other countries. A profound emotional development and refinement is the most marked trait of Indian personality, and it is common to all the races and creeds of the vast sub-continent, from those of the highest civilization to those of the lowest and most primitive.

Again, the key-stone of the arch of family devotion, alike for Hindu and Mahommedan, lies in the feeling of the son for his mother.

Whatever may change or fluctuate, here our feet are on a rock. There can be no variation in the tenderness and intensity of this relationship. In it, personal affection rises to the height of religious passion. It is this fact of Eastern life that gives its depth to our symbol of Madonnahood,—the child as the refuge and glory of woman, the mother giving sanctity and security to life.

Very closely connected, but not identical with this, is the organic part played in the life of the Eastern household by the aged. A gentle raillery, a tender gaiety, is the link between them and members in the prime of life. This is one of the most beautiful features of communal civilization, that the old are an essential factor in the family. There is here none of the dislocation of life that so often results, with the Europeans, from the loneliness and infirmity of elderly persons. Their wisdom forms one of the most valued of the common assets, even while their playfulness ranks them with the children, and the burden of attendance is easily shared amongst the many younger women. India, with her memory of great leisure, is not easily vulgarised by the strenuous ideals that make a man feel himself useless, in the West, when his working days are over. She knows that only with the ending of activity can the most precious fruits of experience come to ripeness. Cooks and blacksmiths may need the strength of youth, but statesmen and bishops are best made at sixty.

We have few classes in Calcutta who seem to us so rough and worthless as our *ghari-wallahs* or cabdrivers. They are Mahommedans for the most part, who have left their families in the country, and they are not noticeable, as a type, for self-restraint or steadiness of conduct. Yet it was one of these whom I met one day at the corner of my own lane, carefully, with an expression of ineffable gentleness, guiding an old Hindu woman through a dangerous crush of vehicles! He had jumped from his box, at sight of the blind and stumbling feebleness, and left his *ghari* in charge of its small footman, or *syce*. It was the Prophet of Arabia who said, "He who kisses the feet of his mother attains to Paradise." In devotion to the mother, and in chivalry for old age, Mahommedan and Hindu, high and low, in India, are absolutely at one. It is a mistake to suppose that even the religious demarcation between Hinduism and Islam has the bitterness that divides, for instance, Geneva from Rome. Sufi-ism, with its roll of saints and martyrs, contributes to Mahommedans a phase of development which matches Hinduism in its highest forms. The apostles of either faith are recognizable by the other. The real divergence between the two religions lies rather in the body of associated customs, than in doctrines, which are not philosophically incomprehensible.

The Mahommedan derives his customs from Arabia, and from a period in which the merging of many tribes in a national unity was the great need : the Hindu bases his habits on his own past, and on the necessity of preserving a higher civilization from modification by lower. In other words, the difference between the two deals rather with matters of household and oratory, woman and the priesthood, than with those interests out of which the lives of *men*, and activities, civic and national, are built. This fact is immediately seen wherever either faith is sovereign. Many of the highest and most trusted officers of a Hindu ruler will be Mahommedans, and to take a special instance, I may say that I have nowhere heard such loyalty expressed for the Nizam of Hyderabad, as by Hindu members of his Government. In the region north of Benares, again where Mahommedanism has been tranquil and undisturbed for hundreds of years, there is something very near to social fusion between the two. A significant indication of this lies in the names given to boys, which are often—like *Ram Baksh,* for example—compounded of roots Sanskritic and Arabic!

With the exception of the word *magnetism,* there is probably no single term so vaguely used as *Caste.* Taking this, however, as referring to a series of social groups, each thorougly marked off from all others, and united within itself by equality of rank, custom and occupation, we shall quickly see that this institution is capable of proving rather favourable than the reverse to solidarity of the public life. All over India to-day, as of old in Babylon or Thebes, or Periclean Athens, the communal intercourse of streets and riversides stands out in bold contrast against the cloisterlike privacy of the home. This is partly due to climate, and partly to the persistence, in this one country, of conceptions and associations which appear to us as classical. In this communal unity, there is no demand for social uniformity. Such matters, concerning only the intimate personal life, are relegated to the sphere of the family and the care of women and priests.

Caste is no concern of the school, the bathing-ghat, or the town. On this side, indeed, the word connotes little more than a rigid form of good-breeding. It defines the ground on which no outsider may intrude. To regard it as a barrier to co-operation would be about as relevant as to view in a similar light the fact that we may not ask a European woman her age. How absurd would be the statement that this rule of etiquette was any obstacle to united action! Granted that in eating and wiving a man consorts with his own, he may do what he chooses, and go where he will, in all other concerns of his life. Each caste is, in effect, to its own members, as a school of self-government; and the whole institution provides an excellent frame-work for labour-organizations and other forms of socio-political activity. These facts, indeed, are so obvious to the eye that views them with the necessary breadth, that it is difficult to see how any other impression ever gained currency.

Many persons use the word unity in a way that would seem to imply that the unity of a lobster, with its monotonous repetition of segments and limbs, was more perfect than that of the human body, which is not even alike on its right and left sides. For my own part, I cannot help thinking that the scientific advance of the nineteenth century has enabled us to think with more complexity than this. I cannot forget a French working man, calling himself a Positivist, who came up to me some years ago, in a university-settlement in the West, and said, "Have the people of India any further proof to offer of the oneness of Humanity, beyond the fact that if I hurt you I hurt myself, and the other fact that no two of us are exactly alike?" And then, seeing perhaps a look of surprise, he added thoughtfully, "for the fact that we are all different is, in its way, a proof of our unity ! " The conception thus indicated, I have come to think an exalted one. My friend spoke of the organic, as distinguished from a merely mechanical unity, and for myself I find an overwhelming aspect of Indian unity in the fact that no single member or province repeats the function of any other.

Against the great common background of highly developed feeling, the Bengalee stands out with his suavity and humour ; the Mahratta exhibits his grimness and tenacity. The one may glory in his imagination, the other in his strength of will. The Punjabee has the faultless courage, and also something of the childlikeness, of a military race. The Dravidian has the gravity and decorum of one whose dwelling is in the shadow of a church. The Mahommedan, wherever we meet him, stands unmatched for his courtesy and grandeur of bearing. And everyone of these, we must remember, responds to the same main elemental motives. With all alike, love of home, pride of race, idealism of woman, is a passion. With every one, devotion to India as India, finds some characteristic expression. To the Hindu of all provinces, his Motherland is the seat of holiness, the chosen home of righteousness, the land of seven sacred rivers, "the place to which sooner or later must come all souls in the quest of God." To the son of Islam, her earth is the dust of his saints. She is the seal upon his greatest memories. Her villages are his home. In her future lies his hope. In both, the nationalising consciousness is fresh and unexhausted. That which Asoka was, seated, two hundred and fifty years before Christ, on the great throne of Pataliputra,—what Akbar was, at Delhi, eighteen centuries later,—that, in the sense of national responsibility, every Indian man must become tomorrow. For this is the age, not of thrones, but of democracies; not of empires, but of nationalities; and the India that faces the sunrise of nations, is young and strong.

THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Young India is fascinated by the political spectacle in European countries : fascinated and also perhaps hypnotised by it. She imagines, perhaps, that until she can reproduce the bear-garden of opposite parties she has failed to emulate the vigour and energy of Western patriotism. This, at least, is the only excuse for that evil fashion which has made its appearance amongst us, of mutual recrimination, and mutual attack. Those who are fighting on different parts of the self-same field are wasting time and ammunition by turning their weapons on each other. The fact is, young India has yet to realise that hers is not a movement of partisan politics at all, but a national, that is to say, a unanimous progression. There is no difference of opinion on national questions, amongst honest men, in India. Put Hindus and Mahommedans together on a Legislative Council. Have they not always to be reckoned with as a single opinion ? Who cares where the Brahmin eats, or whom he invites to his dinner parties ? Does he, and the Kayastha, or the Vaidya, or the Kshattriya, make opposite demands on the University Senate ? As citizens, in the Municipality, is the good of one the good of the others or not ? It is wonderful how long dust can be thrown in men's eyes, by talk that absolutely contradicts facts. It is wonderful how far the hounds can be drawn on a false scent. A large amount of misdirected activity and confused political thought arises in India, from the mere fact that the political method here is largely imitative, and is apt to imitate the wrong things.

The one thing that strikes a first-time visitor to the Congress, for instance,—a visitor who goes with a determination to ignore preconceptions and judge as far as possible from facts,—is the extraordinary agreement of all the members, from extreme right to extreme left. An old man in this corner considers it so ill-advised to make a certain pronouncement that he will retire from the body if its enunciation be insisted on. A youngster over there pooh-

poohs this overcaution, and challenges the old man to express his disbelief in the principle asserted. As likely as not, the young man is in the right. But these are the disagreements, over which young India, looking on, is like to lash itself into a fury of vituperation and despair ! It is clear to every outsider in the meantime, that there is here no stuff of difference, whatsoever, and that at such a computation the ship of the national movement in India must be manned by educated India, solid.

Thus the Congress represents, not a political, or partisan movement, but the political side of a national movement—a very different thing. It is successful, not in proportion as it sees its debates carry weight in high quarters, not in proportion as its views are officially adopted, but in proportion to the ability and earnestness with which it conducts its own deliberations, in proportion to the number which it can call together and make efficient in political methods, and in proportion to the information it can disseminate throughout the country on questions of national significance. If these fundamental facts be once clearly understood, it will matter very little thereafter what form the resolutions take in Congress, matter very little about an act of politeness, more or less, or about the number of adjectives in a given sentence. For it will be understood that the real task of the Congress is that of an educational body, educating its own members in that new mode of thinking and feeling which constitutes a sense of nationality ; educating them in the habit of prompt and united action, of political trustiness, of communal open-eyedness; educating itself, finally, in the knowledge of a mutual sympathy that embraces every member of the vast household which dwells between the Himalayas and Cape Comorin, between Manipur and the Arabian Sea.

This implies, however, that the main body of the army is not in the Congress, that the Congress as a whole is merely one side,—the political side,—of an incomparably vaster, though less definitely organised host. And by the antithesis, no opposition, between the efforts of the two, progression is secured. Thus, corresponding to the Congress, the National Movement must have another, and non-political limb, as it were. But at the same time, it is clear that this non-political must have greater difficulty than the political element in defining to itself its own objective.

And yet a programme,—not a rigid platform but a suggestive immanation—is almost a necessity to it. What are the tasks that the National Movement has to face and in what order ?

The task of all alike is one,—the education of the whole nation, in all its parts, in a common sentiment of unity with each other and with their soil. But it is a mistake to think that this education will in every case come scholastically. Reading and writing will facilitate it, but it will not wait for the schoolmaster. Already we have seen the women expressing themselves through the *Swadeshi tapasya.* In national and civic existence, this cause has given them a step onward and upward that will never be retraced. But while the appeal made to them sympathies so effectively by this cry of the Home-land, when made to the people themselves—the inarticulate, un-educated helpless masses—it must be by means of the industrial reconstruction which the Swadeshi Vow has necessitated. Practice first, theory afterwards. First, mutual love and loyalty, and secondly, all that ideas, all that instruction can do to give to that new-born consciousness of brotherhood, intellectual depth and steadiness. What the National Movement as a whole has to do then is to nationalise and vocalise two great areas of moral force that are at present nationally almost mute. These areas consist of the women and the peasants.

We love that which we think of, we think of that which we know. First then we must build up a clear conception, and afterwards love will come of itself, and thus through the length and breadth of our vast country will go the thrill of the great thought. "This and no other is our Motherland! We are Indians every one!"

Here then we have one extreme of the task of nationalisation, to be carried out by that immense body of nation-makers to which every student and every educated man and woman in India belong by natural right. At the far end of this line are those whose task it is to carry the national colours to higher ground. Here are the original workers in science, in history, in art, in letters, sworn to let no Western pass them in this race for excellence, vowed, whatever be their task, to conquer in it or to die.

The question which arises here as to the nature and duties of the pioneer intellect is quite different from a similar question as applied to workers of the second generation. The great majority of the nation-making generation bear to missionaries and architects of that consciousness the same relation that the ordinary *grihasta* bears to the *sadhu.* They cannot live that life themselves, yet by their sympathy and silent support, they make the life a possibility. It is important then, that these should realise that the motto for the age is,—"Mutual aid, self-organisation, co-operation!"

The *Grihasta* wants a little of the courage of the martyr in vowing himself, not to a battle of the spirit but to a determined worldly success. His should be the undertaking in financing national associations, farmer's aid organisations, co-operative credit enterprises. But first and last and above all, he needs to understand that it is by these movements, these undertakings, these studies, that education will actually be carried far and wide and that the movement for Indian Nationality will gradually transform itself into the Indian Nation.

THE PRINCIPLE OF NATIONALITY

The principle of nationality depends upon the fact that the supreme organic circumstances in moulding the destiny of man, is place. Those who having a common region of birth, connect the work, the institution, the ideals, and the purposes of their lives with that region and with their fellows, and those who, doing this, undergo a common economic experience, form a nation, with the duties, the responsibilities, and the faculties of a nation.

It has been said that man's only right is to do his duty. But this implies that his right is also to do his whole duty. And what is true of the individual is true of communities. The people of a country has an inalienable right to do the whole work of their country.

Regarded from this point of view, then, each man becomes, not an entity by himself not a fragment of a family or class or sect but *a free member of a great nation.* In this way, he has to learn to think and feel and act.

In the realm of thought, this means, that each man must recognise his birthland as the supreme fact in his life, and must consciously bow himself to her influence, glorying in it, and striving to rediscover and realise it in its essentials. In the realm of feeling, he must relate himself to the birthland and to all those who, with him, are born of her. The land and the people—India and the Indian nation. The heart of the nationchild, of the nation's man, must be great sounding board for the love and history and ideals of every province. Like the dome of the mosque, it must echo back in music all that is uttered beneath it, and every joy, and every sorrow, every mourning and every hope, of the Indian heart, must find place there. Like a vast picture-gallery, the heart of India's child, must be hung with the beauties of the land, mountain and coast, river and plain, morning and evening. And finally in conduct the man who carries himself as a member of a nation cannot afford to be as one who dreams. If all the work of the country is to be done by the people of the country, it follows that none can go for a moment unemployed. The light that lights the head of apostles, is about the man who understands. Energy, responsibility and an insatiable longing for self-sacrifice are his.

All these, thought, feeling, work, devoted to a single end, make CHARACTER. Accepting the great purpose of a nationality, and struggling to serve it with whole-hearted devotion, the man and the community become transformed. Their purpose is renewed, is clearly conceived, is still more earnestly served. Experience grows to wisdom. Character is stored up. And by strength of character man can remove mountains,—"It is character that can cleave through adamantine difficulty."

In all lands, holiness and strength are the treasures which the race places in the hands of woman to preserve rather than in those of man: A few men here and there become great teachers, but most have to spend their days in toil for the winning of bread. It is in the home that these renew their inspiration and their faith and insight and the greatness of the home lies in *tapasya* of the women. The Indian wives and mothers, do not need to be reminded of how much Rama, Sri Krishna, and Sankracharya owed to their mothers. The quiet silent lives of women, living in their homes like *tapasvinis,* proud only to be faithful, ambitious only to be perfect, have done more to preserve the *Dharma* and cause it to flourish, than any battles that have been fought outside.

To-day our country and her *Dharma* are in a sore plight and in a special manner he calls on her daughters at this moment to come forward, as those in the ages before, to aid her with a great *Sraddha*.. How shall this be done? we are all asking. In the first place let Hindu mothers renew in their sons the thirst for *Brahmacharya.* Without this our nation is shorn of her ancient strength. No country in the world has an ideal of the student's life so high as this and if it be allowed to die out of India where shall the world look to restore it? In *Brahmacharya* is this secret of all strength, all greatness. Let every mother determine that her sons shall be great! And secondly, can we not cultivate in our children and ourselves a vast *compassion.* This compassion will make us eager to know the sorrows of all men, the griefs of our land, and this growing knowledge will produce strong workers, working for work's sake, ready to die, if only they may serve their country and fellow-men. Let us realise all that our country has done for us,—how she has given us birth and food and friends, our beloved ones, and our faith itself. Is she not indeed our *Mother?* Do we not long to see her once more *Mahabharata?*

THE FUNCTION OF ART IN SHAPING NATIONALITY

It is in the endeavour to take spiritual possession of its own, in struggling to carry out the tasks before it, that the national idea is shaping itself in India. Re-adjustments are necessary in all directions, and in making those very re-adjustments, it may be, we shall become, we are actually becoming, a nation. For it is not change that is destructive, but *aimless* or *wrongly-purposed change*. And precisely from such it is that the ideal of nationality, with its overwhelming impulse of moral direction and ethical stability, is to deliver us. Wherever we look, on the sea of struggle, we see this thought,—" That we be a nation,"—shining as their pole-star above the tossing voyagers.

We may turn, for instance, to the culture and position of Indian womanhood. Shall there be new developments here ? And in what direction ? The immediate need at all costs to save ourselves from the present ever-hastening process of despair and ruin, and the further need to bind ourselves together, in a firm and coherent whole, self-conscious, self-directed, self-controlled, in other words, the will towards nationality, gives us at once an answer to our question and a guide. Change there must be. Shall India alone, in the streaming destines of the *Jagat,* refuse to flow on from form to form? But what changes we make shall be made freely, deliberately, of our own will and judgment, deliberately designed towards an end chosen by ourselves. Shall we, after centuries of an Indian womanhood, fashioned on the pattern of Sita, of Savitri, of Rani Ahalya Bai, descend to the creation of coquettes and *divorces?* Shall the Indian Padmini be succeeded by the Greek Helen? Change it is that there must be, or India goes down in the shipwreck of her past achievements. Change there must be. But new learning shall add to the old gravity and wisdom, without taking from the ancient holiness. Wider responsibilities shall make the pure more pure. Deeper knowledge shall be the source of a new and grander tenderness. This generation may well cherish the hope that they shall yet see the hand of the great mother shaping a womanhood of the future so fair and noble that the candle-light of the ancient dreams shall grow dim in the dawn of that modern realisation.

The Education of Woman is, however, only one of many questions. In Science, in Education as a whole, in commercial and industrial organisation, it is a truism to say that we are now on the road to fresh developments. In the case of social questions, for example, we have long been agitated by disputes as to the desirability or undesirability of certain immediate transformations. But perhaps the actual fact is that we have never yet been fully competent to discuss such matters. We have perhaps had neither the necessary knowledge, and this kind of knowledge, it may be pointed out, is the rarest and most difficult to obtain, in the whole world, or in life, nor the necessary responsibility, nor, above all, the necessary leisure from foreign criticism and advice, all of which we must have, if we are ever to arrive at opinions which are really our own, on these important matters. In fact the growth of a sense of nationality involves, amongst other things, something like the spontaneous appearance of a sovereign faculty amongst us. It is like the perception of their own unity and inter-relation, amongst the different parts of a single organism. Related to each other in the bonds of this idea, we become able to sit in national commission, as it were, on the problems of our own society and our own future.

And about nothing, perhaps, is this more necessary than with regard to Indian Art. Let us suppose then that the national intellect has placed itself in an attitude to consider and predetermine this question of the past and future of art in India. What is it to find ? What is it to decide ?

Hinduism, in one of its aspects, is neither more nor less than a great school of symbolism. Every peasant, every humblest bazar-dweller understands and loves a picture, a pot, a statue, a decorative emblem of any sort. The culture of the eye is perfect in this land, as it is said to be in Italy ; and the ancient habit of image-worship has made straight and short and much-travelled the road from eye to heart. The appeal of this symbolism, moreover, is universal. It matters not what be the language spoken, nor whether the reader be literate or illiterate the picture tells its own story, and tells it unmistakably. The lamp left lighted on the threshold that the house-wife, returning from the river before dawn, may know her own door; the bunch of grain made fast with mud to the lintel ; the light beneath the *tulsi* plant, or the wending of the cows to the village at sundown, these scenes and such as these will carry a single message to every Indian heart alike. Hence art offers us the opportunity of a great common speech, and its rebirth is essential to the upbuilding of the motherland—its re-awakening rather. For India has known many great art-epochs which cannot yet have died. The age that sculptured Elephanta was deeply impressed with the synthesis of Hinduism. The power that painted Ajanta was as free and living in its enjoyment and delineation of nature as any modern school of realists. The builders and carvers of Sanchi, of Amraoti and Gandhara enjoyed a continuous evolution of art, marked by great periodic waves of enthusiasm, through several successive centuries. Even a Mahommedan Empire, apart from its own architectural undertakings, only changed the form, it never atempted to suppress the process of creative art in India, as those who have seen the illuminated manuscripts in the Library at Bankipore can bear witness.

An age of nationality, then, must resume into its own hands the power of each and all of these epochs. The key to new conquests lies always in taking up rightly our connection with the past. The man who has no inheritance has no future. The modern student needs to know and understand this. For he has suffered the ordeal of being made suddenly to survey the world as a whole. He is by no means confined, as were his fathers, to the imagination of the things that his own people have done. He is in a position to compare the art of Egypt with that of Greece, that of mediæval Italy or Holland with that of modern France. And if he knows where he himself stands, in relation to it all, this may prove an emancipation. But if he do not know, it is merely like taking away the protecting hedge from the plant that is too young to grow alone.

For India is not, in matters of art, to hark back to old ways, and refuse to consider or adopt anything that is new. But at the same time, the Indian people have been trained in Indian art-conventions and cultured through Indian associations, and it is worse than useless to desire to speak to them through the conventions and associations of Italy or Greece. An Indian painting, if it is to be really Indian and really great, must appeal to the Indian heart in an Indian way, must convey some feeling or idea that is either familiar or immediately comprehensible; and must further, to be of the very highest mark, arouse in the spectator a certain sense of a revelation for which he is the nobler. But to do this, it is clear that it must be made up of elements which in themselves are already approved of by the communal taste. Thus an Indian man who has studied the carved stone doorways of Orissa, or the beaten silver of Southern temples has already possessed himself of a great language of the beautiful, and when he speaks in that language, in India, he will be understood by all, and outside India by those who are sufficiently trained, or sufficiently gifted. Now this language he will speak to perfection, because he himself will understand every line and curve of it. But will he be as competent to represent, say a Gothic window, as he is to draw an Orissan exterior? Obviously not. In the foreign case, fine artist and learned student as he is on his own ground, he will be liable to prepetrate faults and even vulgarities of style which may altogether spoil his work in the eyes of those brought up in a world of Gothic architecture. At the very best, the foreign imitator will produce only would-be Gothic, just as the English or German Manufacturer can produce only a would-be Indian pattern in his cloth. We see thus that even the elements of which a picture is made up, are like a language, and just as no true poet could willingly choose to write all his poems in a foreign tongue, so no artist can do work which is eternal in its quality, unless his pictures are couched in terms "understanded of the people." All great expression, whether by writing or drawing or sculpture or what not, is to some extent the outcry of a human heart for human sympathy, and men do not so cry in an unknown tongue.

But the fact that the elements of our style are peculiar to our own country does not preclude their reaching the heights of the universal appeal. The Orissan doorway could not be produced by a foreigner, but it can be enjoyed by him. The absolutely beautiful is understood by all humanity. None of us could reproduce an ancient Egyptian temple, but all of us must admire one when we see it. It came out of its own order. It expressed that order—and its greater and more general qualities speak to us all. At the same time it must be remembered that in order to make another like it, we should have to feel and live and hope and pray and be, in all respects, like the men who built it. And this fact doubtless prevents our understanding or enjoying it, as was done in its own time. For in spite of all the false theories of sentimentalists, a ruin is *never* so beautiful as the building in use.

Nothing endears like the familiarity of daily life.

As an example, however, of the way in which the universal element in a picture may triumph over that which is local and limited in it, we might take the position which is gradually being assumed in the Hindu pantheon by pictures of the Madonna and Child. One can hardly go down the Chitpore Road without catching sight of one of these. Now it is clear that in this case it is the intimate humanity of the motive, with the bright and simple colour, that appeals to the humble owner. A barrier to his sympathy lies in the foreignness of the subject. He knows the names of the two characters, it is true, but very little more about them. He cannot imagine their daily life together. He knows no stories of *that* Divine Childhood! Yet, it is after all, a mother and her child, and the whole world understands. A thousand incidents of every day are common to these and their like everywhere. So the human in the great work redeems the local. But let us suppose an equally great masterpiece, equally simple and direct and full of the mingling of stateliness and tender intimacy, to have for its subject an *Indian* mother and her babe. Will it be more loved, or less, by its devotee?

Whoever chose the pictures that are painted on the walls of the Jeypore museum, understood the greatness of the past of Indian art, and understood, too, the direction in which to expect for it a mighty future. There is one of these pictures taken from an illuminated manuscript, but enlarged by the copyists to some fifty or a hundred times the original size—which represents the great scene of Yudhisthira's Gambling. This picture is a blaze of scarlet and gold, full of portraits, full of movement, a marvel of beauty. It is true that no modern artist could have painted in such unawareness of what we call perspective. But it is also true that no modern artist who has yet appeared, and indeed no one since the age of the missal-painters themselves, would have been able to fill the same space with splendour of life and pattern. And it is certain that India does not want to lose these greater qualities, in gaining, what is, from an artistic point of view the less.

It is, however, a characteristic of great styles that they can assimilate new knowledge without self-degradation. The creator of this gambling scene would have known quite well what to do with a little added science about vanishing points and the centre of vision ! Such knowledge would have left its impress on all he did, but it would never have led him to sacrifice his beauty and purity of colour, nor his love of sumptuousness and magnificence, nor his knack of hitting off vividly a likeness or a mood nor his power of making of a picture a piece of decoration. There is such a thing as a national *manner* in art, and India needs only to add the technical knowledge of Europe to this manner of her own. Not that it is to be supposed that correct perspective is exclusively characteristic of the West. A small picture known as the Coronation of Sita and Rama was bought recently for the Calcutta Art Gallery. Behind the throne, in this beautiful little painting, is the palace of Ajodhya, and behind the palace, the river, with its ships, and fields, with armies under review and what not. And in all this work of the date of 1700 or thereabouts, and of what may for convenience be known as the Lucknow School, the perspective is quite perfect, while at the same time, for harmony of tints and quality of design, it is equal to the best of its forerunners. Never was anything in a mediæval Dutch picture more detailed than this palace of Ajodhya by some unknown master. It is built of white marble and open, much of it, to the sky; and here, with a magnifying glass, we may see the cows feeding, the horses ready saddled in their stalls, every camel and elephant and banner in its place, and all the long courts and apartments converging in most admirable order towards the horizon, like some fair City of Heaven even in a dream.

But if so many and such noble characteristics had already been attained by Indian art, what, it may be asked, is the quality in European painting which has so fascinated the Indian Art student, as to lead him out of his own path into endeavours which have hitherto been for the most part as ill-conceived as their execution was futile and disastrous ? In nine out of ten cases the student will answer that their truth to nature is the great charm and attraction of European pictures. This is very flattering to the art of the West, but alas, he who knows more of that art sees deeper and shakes his head. This 'truth to nature' of which the young disciple prates is usually mere hardness and coarseness. Nature's greatest beauties, like those of the soul, are spiritual and elusive. Quite the loveliest thing I ever saw in Greek art was not she whom Heine calls 'Our dear Lady of Milo,' but a drawing taken from a vase and painted out by Miss Jane Harrison, of a maiden riding on a swan. Her hair is tightly braided, somewhat like a coif, and everything about her dainty person is suggestive of the Puritan rather than the classic, some sweet Elaine or Gretchen or Ushabala, may be, of a people who really understood the beautiful, not in bare flesh and protrusive muscles merely, but in all its phases, wherever it was to be found. Similarly, difficult as the present generation of art-students may find it to believe, the worn face of a Hindu widow with its fugitive smile and deep abiding sorrow, may be better worth drawing, as well as more difficult to draw than the admired and boasted charms of wealth and youth and health. The experienced critic of European art itself knows well how true this is, and even in the Sistine Madonna will see less of a beautiful Roman woman than of the temperament and mind of the man Raphael. A picture is not a photograph. Art is not science. Creation is not mere imitation. The clay figures of Lucknow and Krishnagar do not, charming as they are, represent a high type of sculpture. But even if fidelity to nature were the highest criterion of painting, what about the portraits of the Nawabs of Oudh that hang in the gallery at Lucknow? It is true that these great canvases have been copied from tiny miniatures. But has any one ever seen more splendid portraits? From that first Viceroy despatched from Delhi and gazing out over time and space, with sense of the infinitude of hope, to the very last, through all the list, each man stands before us living. Perhaps the least interesting of the portraits is that of the greatest of those kings, Asa-ud-Daulah, the Well-Beloved. But they are all there, even that ancestor, second or third from the last sovereign, who was so renowned for his beauty that in the bazaar to this day there are men who cherish other portraits of him as their most prized possession.

Truth to nature, then, is not uniquely characteristic of western art, but in some degree or other must needs distinguish all its developments everywhere. Much of the joy of a great picture, indeed, is that in it we see nature as the painter saw it, often in an aspect vastly more beautiful than any we could have caught ourselves. There is a fragment in Griffith's book on Ajanta, of a woman clasping the feet of an image, taken from the frescoes in those caves. Here we have the work of an artist who combined two different qualities in a marvellous degree. He saw the human body as the Greeks saw it, round, strong, and nobly vigorous. And he saw the soul as the mediæval Catholic saw it, in an agony of prayer. It may be that along some such line of reconciling and revealing power lies the future of art in India. For certainly these are the two great opportunities offered by this country,—to know the human form, and to recognise the expression of overwhelming emotion, especially in worship.

But what is it, then, in European art, that tempts the Indian artist into emulation ? The attraction lies, I take it, in *the opportunity which the European conception of art offers to the individual artist.* Art in the West is not merely the hereditary occupation of a craftsman. It has become, in modern times at least, a language through which great minds can express their outlook on the world. It is, in fact, one of the modes of poetry, and as such is open perforce to all inspiration, wherever and however it may be born. In India on the contrary, it has always been, or tended to be, treated as a craft, and more or less restricted therefore, to a caste.

Now caste-education has the advantage of causing accumulation of skill from generation to generation. In the case of the goldsmiths, for example, we should quickly detect a degradation of knowledge and taste, due to the sudden advent of workers from without. A similar deterioration may be witnessed any day in Calcutta, as having befallen the art of dyeing. For undoubtedly it has been by the setting aside of the taste and judgment of hereditary craftsmen, in favour of new and untried tints, that the feeling of those who, in matters of colour, are the uneducated, has become dominant in the community. So that, in spite of brightness and daring, the former beauty of Indian dyeing has given place to a state of things more fit for tears than laughter.

On the other hand, in all such cases, we must remember that doubtless the monotony of the older style paved the way in each instance for its sudden and universal abandonment. For an art that is followed by a hereditary guild tends to an unendurable sameness, tends to become ridden by conventions, till at last the mind of the community revolts, and seeks new ideals. This is unquestionably true of painting. The miniatures of Delhi and Lucknow might be skilful portraits, growing in cleverness from generation to generation. But they lacked elements of newness, lacked indeed the power and the opportunity to create such elements. The desirability of striking out some great new style could not occur to the minds of these painters.

For caste produces habit, and habit, though it heightens skill, tends to limit imagination.

In a guild of painters, then, drawn not from any single caste, but from the nation as a whole, the first characteristic that we have a right to expect is vastness and freedom of imagination. These artists are not limited by any rule in their choice of a subject, nor in their treatment of it. They are workmen, it is true, even as their fathers were, for all painters are primarily workmen. But they are also poets, dreamers and prophets of the future. Art, socially considered, therefore, has in our time gone through a great transition in India. And just as in the Europe of the thirteenth century, Giotto, the master-painter of a similar transition, left us the highest culture of his period in his works—giving to the Florence that lay thrilled under the shadow of Dante, as Lubke so beautifully says, "a *Divina Commedia* carved in stone,"—so now and always the artist becomes freed from the conventions of the caste, only that he may submit himself to a greater convention which is the mind and heart of his age. The highest art is always charged with spiritual intensity, with intellectual and emotional revelation. It follows that it requires the deepest and finest kind of education. The man who has not entered into the whole culture of his epoch can hardly create a supreme expression of that culture. The man whose own life is not tense with the communal struggle cannot utter to those about him the inner meaning of their secret hope.

In the great ages of the society, one thought permeates all classes alike. One mind, one spirit is everywhere. And this unity of ideal carries up on its high tides even the hidden craftsman in his secluded corner, till he becomes the mouthpiece of a national impulse. This fact it was that gave their greatness to the carvings at Elephanta, and the paintings at Ajanta. For speech is noteworthy, not in itself, but by dint of the power behind, that presses forward through the words. And so with Art. Its re-birth in India to-day can only take place, if it be consciously made the servant and poet of the mighty dream of an Indian Nationality. For the same reason, there is little or nothing in England now that can be called

Art. An imperialised people have nothing to struggle for, and without the struggle upwards there can be no great genius, no great poetry. Therefore, in periods of empire Art must always undergo decay. But the reverse is the case with ourselves. We have to struggle for everything,—struggle to make our thought clear and definite ; struggle to carry and scatter it broadcast, that we may all be made one in its name ; struggle again, when this is done, to make it a reality to others as well as ourselves.

THE MESSAGE OF ART

Art, then, is charged with a spiritual message,—in India to-day, the message of the Nationality. But if this message is actually to be uttered, the profession of the painter must come to be regarded, not simply as a means of earning livelihood, but as one of the supreme ends of the highest kind of education. Thus, an Art-school now-a-days would need to be a University; the common talk amongst the students out of hours, to cover all the accepted conclusions, all the burning questions, of the day; their reading to be marked by an insatiable curiosity for all the noble secrets of the world.

For, it is undeniable that everything great, whether for good or evil, begins with the earnestness of a group of students. When men have reached a decision on any of the critical questions of life, it is already too late for them to come together. The world-shaking confederacies are never made up of masters. One mature mind and many disciples, or many young minds struggling together : these are the groups through which power is developed. For proof of this, we might look at the movements which have grown up in Calcutta itself, as the result of the ferment amongst the students in the time of Keshub Chunder Sen. The whole of the *Naba Bidhan* with its indisputable powers of moral education, the whole of the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj,* with its fearless and unselfish advocacy of every progressive movement, and the whole of the work of the Order of Ramakrishna, to name only three definite associations, are our inheritance from the students of that time.

Instances farther from home abound. Who can doubt that the vicious theories of Imperialism propagated by Curzon and his school, are the result of the stand that made itself popular amongst the sons of the privileged classes at Oxford in his student days ? Lord Ripon, on the other hand, in *his* young manhood, was one of the innermost circle of that group of "Christian Socialists" that also numbered amongst its members Charles Kingsley and

Tom Hughes. And it was here, as their friends knew well, that he and his wife trained and developed that noble partnership for the defeated, that instinct of justice and equality, for which their names will shine so long in history.

'The Fabian Society of Socialists are one of the central sources in London to-day of the culture of the democratic idea. And they began as a group of young and hardworked men and women, meeting on Saturday afternoons to study certain books, and discuss the social questions involved.

The London positivists—another ganglionic centre of moral impulses in the intellectual life of England,—were, a generation or so ago, a knot of brilliant young Oxford men, captured by the great *guru,* Congreve, the English clergyman who renounced so much to follow the faith of Auguste Comte.

And the Mediæval movement in English Art,—its most notable development, probably, during the nineteenth century,—began with young men, Rossetti, Morris, Burne-Jones, Simeon Solomon, and others.

No—the old may have justice on their side in deprecating their own powers. But the young have no right to doubt themselves. The future is theirs. They, and no others, are born to inherit the earth.

Now, Universities are built up of thought and hope, not out of mere organisation alone. Let two men take up the study of art in the right spirit, and they will change the whole art-world of India. Let the men of a single art-school understand comprehensively the problem before them, and the new art is already born. For of life comes forth life, but without the quickening of the spirit, there can be nothing but death.

But how can a man be a painter of Nationality ? Can an abstract idea be given form and clothed with flesh, and painted ? Undoubtedly it can. Indeed if we had questioned this, Mr. A. N. Tagore's exquisite picture of "Bharatmata" would have proved its possibility. But it cannot be done all at once. Such an achievement lies amongst the higher reaches of artistic attainment, and would be impossible for the beginner, with his foot on the first rung of the ladder. How is he to proceed, that he may gradually rise to the delineation of such great ideal forms ?

In the first place, it must be understood that art is concerned with the pleasure which we derive from sight. Not with the knowledge. The picture that ministers to *that* need is a scientific diagram, merely ! The fundamental requisite, then, is a truthfulness of sense. Without the ability to decide promptly and finally that we *like or dislike* a certain delineation, a certain situation, we shall inevitably go wrong in art. Not every scene is fit for a picture. And this truth needs emphasising in modern India especially, because here an erroneous conception of fashion has gone far to play havoc with the taste of the people. In a country in which that posture is help to be ill-bred, every home contains a picture of a young woman lying full length on the floor and writing a letter on a lotus-leaf ! As if a sight that would outrage decorum in actuality, could be beautiful in imagination ! In a country in which romantic emotion is never allowed to show itself in public, pictures of the wooing of Arjuna and Subhadra, abound.

These errors proceed from a false ideal of correctness, which leads us to be untrue to the dictates of our own feeling. Under the influence of such misconception, I have seen an Indian girl pick out of a collection of photographs the most unattractive nudities of Puvis de Chavannes, from the Paris Sorbonne, and declare that of them all she liked these best. It was evident to kindly on-lookers that she had not taken the pains to examine her choice closely, but imagined that they must be the correct thing. Similarly, it is not uncommon to find in the guest-room of an Indian bungalow, pictures of ladies smoking cigarettes and otherwise comforting themselves, the exposure of which, in a European house, could only be intended as a deliberate insult to the guest.

In all these cases alike, the mistake arises from the cold-blooded endeavour to make ourself like a given thing because it is supposed to be 'high art,' instead of for the simple reason that it affords pleasure. Pictures of the nude and semi-nude are always best avoided in India, since it is almost impossible here, at present, to attain the education necessary for their true discrimination, and mistakes in taste on such a subject are dangerous to moral dignity. There is, nevertheless, a certain grandeur of reverence—a sense of the impersonal—in such ancient works as the Venus of Milo, in the mediæval 'Girl taking a thorn out of her Foot' by Donatello, and in the modern Triptych of Love by G. F. Watts, which lifts the human form out of the realm of the merely physical, and suffuses it with spiritual meaning. But to those who find in themselves no perception of this fact, and to those, who have had no experience in foreign art, such a statement must sound like wordy vapouring, and the expert rule undoubtedly is that the nude be passed by altogether.

This training and hightening of sense-perception, till the eye becomes like a perfectly regulated instrument, reliable as to what it chooses and what it rejects, is more important and more difficult than would readily be suspected. In Indian art, particularly, there is a tendency to become too intellectual or too technical, which is apt periodically to override the artistic instinct, and destroy art. Thus in the Lahore Museum, after a long series of exquisite ancient sculptures which may or may not show the influence of Bactrian or Chinese craftsmen, we come upon the emaciated figure of the *Fasting* Buddha. In Jeypore, also, we hear of a skeleton Kali. Now these things are wrong. They mark the dying power of an art-period. Art is not science. The pursuit of the beautiful—not necessarily the sensuously beautiful, but always the beautiful,—is her true function. The artist has a right to refuse, as not suitable to his purpose, all that to his particular temperament appears as unbeautiful. Indeed we instinctively assume him to have done this, and believe that we may praise or condemn his taste and judgment accordingly.

In nature, then, there is much which is not beautiful, and the artist must judge continually between her diverse elements. In a picture we want neither the mean, nor the muddy, nor the confused. Hardly any scène can be counted lovely that is without *light*. Even water is as meaningless in a picture as huddled crowns of cocoanut palms, if it be unlighted. I had long admired certain Dutch pictures in the London national gallery, without being able to discover the secret of their spell. They were by a man called De Hoogh, and consisted of little courts and cooking rooms with red pavements. Nothing very striking in the subjects, for as a matter of personal taste, I immensely prefer Madonnas and Angels to kitchens. At last I took my puzzle to a great artist. "De Hoogh is one of the few people who have ever known how to paint sunlight", was his reply to my question. At last the mystery of the curious uplifting of spirit was explained! I returned to De Hoogh and found it true. His red brick floors lay always in the light.

Contrast of various sorts, is, again, a great element in beauty, contrast within unity. So of course is colour. Amongst studies by Indian art-students, I have seen many oil-paintings of dull unlighted tanks lined by thatched huts, the whole overshadowed by heavy forbidding trees, painted in blue green. Now these depressing renderings of depressing scenes were true enough to the fact, even to the fact of many a place we love. In outline, they were good enough. Yes, but a single luminous touch, on house or pond or leaves, would perhaps have changed the whole, as by the stroke of miracle. There is another picture often seen, of the child Dhruva making his way into the forest. It is a picture of confusion, without one point of radiance. Wild undergrowth in muddy blue-green does not make a picture. To the child Dhruva, as he actually went by the forest-ways to his heart's desire, there was, it appears to me, some great sense of overarching loftiness, of spreading starlit sky, of open path, a wondrous call and invitation of the Infinite leading him on and on into the sleeping silence in the depth of the forest. These things are not suggested by the picture we know. Moreover, if the artist had realised that his duty was to paint what gave him *joy,* instead of that, merely, which he had often seen, that picture would have been very very different.

Thus a true picture must be luminous, and it must be suggestive. It must, moreover, have a beautiful subject, which at once rouses our love and aspiration. Now Indian roads and streets and river-banks are full of subjects which would make such pictures, only we must have a *heart* to see them by. It is through the heart that the artist must do all his seeing. Indian women, with their incomparable draperies; the beggars with the staff and begging-bowl that hints of Shiva; labour, beautiful in all lands, but here still further dignified by its wonderful gentleness and refinement; the priest in the temple, the boatman on the river, the mother with her child, the bride stepping forth to the bridal, do you Indian students of Indian art see nothing in any of these that you long to record? Can you not go through life seeking for the glimpses that open up the great vistas? They are seen oftener in this country than anywhere in Europe! In almost any home one might find the group from which one could paint the Nativity of Christ and the *Nanda-Utsab* of Krishna. Have you not felt the beauty of the little earthen lamp set alight at evening beneath the *tulsi* plant? Have you not breathed the peace of the *Sánti-jal* ceremony in the gathering dusk? Is there for you no mystic significance in the *Baran dálá*?

Let no one dream that the rendering of a blue pot, or a flamecoloured flower, of a pretty scene, or an interesting group, is the work of the painter. Far better were crudeness of colour with agony of thought behind. Far better were the rudest drawing with the weight of symbolism heavy on the drooping eyelids of the humanity portrayed. For Art, like science, like education, like industry, like trade itself, must now be followed "For the remaking of the Motherland" and for no other aim.

INDIAN SCULPTURE*

We have here for the first time a book about Indian art written by a European, which expresses, throughout its pages, a feeling of love and respect for India and her people. To Mr. Havell, Indian art is no mere toy of commerce, nor is it even the fruit of some rich bygone period, irretrievably departed. He sees India past, present and future, as one. The builders of fortresses and tombs, of palaces and temples are the same Indian people, who are alive to-day, and could do as much again, if need arose, or opportunity called. Seeing behind each historic achievement of our art, the social and psychological background that gave it birth, he finds, in our present continuity with that background, the rich promise of the future. Indian society is still unspoilt, in this author's eyes, for art and industries. As long as the handicraft dominates the situation, India remains in that fertile mediæval condition, out of which the cathedrals of Europe were built, and her great pictures painted, but which Europe for love of gain, has cast for ever behind her.

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* Indian Sculpture and Painting—E. B. Havell. *John Murray.*

"India, unlike Europe," says our author, "has a still living, traditional, and national art, intimately bound up with the social and religious life of the people; and this art, if we knew it better, might help both Europeans and Indians to a closer mutual sympathy and understanding. But the secularised and denationalised art of Europe has no affinity with the living art of India, and we, aliens in race, thought, and religion, have never taken anything but a *dilettante* archæological, or commercial interest in it. Its deeper meanings are hidden from us, and those spiritual longings and desires which come straight from the heart of a people, to find expression in their poetry, music, and their art, strike no chord of sympathy in ours."

But this passage must not be held by Indian readers to imply that we, because we still have a "living, traditional and national art," are to hold blindly by every chance thought and impulse that comes to us artistically, believing that we are divinely inspired in this matter and therefore unfailingly correct in every particular. Such a fallacy could not tempt us, in other subjects. India, almost alone amongst the nations, has still, in like fashion, "a living traditional and national" logic of her own. But this does not mean that every Indian tyro is logically infallible! A severe training would be necessary, for the most Indian of Indians, before he could venture to trust his own opinion against that of the pundits of Nuddea, for instance, and the training required to qualify the judgment in art is not less stern and difficult than that for logic. We have just been going through the least hopeful and most chaotic translation that has ever overtaken us as a people, in art. Under European Commercialism, our decorative faculty has been shaken to its very roots. Our architecture is undermined by the desire for cheapness, and the high fiscal value of materials. Our noble ideals have been almost eclipsed by the love of cheap notoriety. If we are ever to emerge out of this confusion, we can only do so by patiently building up a great art on a basis of sincere admiration of the truly beautiful for true reasons. But in order to know how to begin directing this force of admiration, we want the help of a competent mind and this is what Mr. Havell's book gives us. It is an account of how a trained mind may look to relate itself to Indian art, primarily to the great works of the past, but secondarily also to the possibility of present and future. From this point of view the work is as useful to the European as to the Indian reader. But in its communication of courage and inspiration, it is of supreme value to us.

Our author rightly feels that Indian art is only to be understood through Indian ideals. He points out that the current idea, that India derived her art from Greece, is of very little consequence so long as it is admitted that her *ideals* were not derived from Greece. "It is of course true that every nationality, when it seeks to work out its artistic ideals, makes use of any agents, native or foreign, which happen to be within reach. But the Greeks no more created Indian sculpture and painting than they created Indian philosophy and religion. Their aesthetic ideals were essentially different from those of

India, and they never at any time imposed them upon Indian art, which, in its distinctive and essential character, is entirely the product of Indian thought and Indian artistic genius."

This a fine argument, finely stated. Throughout his published writings, Mr. Havell always answers the charge of the derivative character of Indian works of art, by pointing to the calm and assured orientalism of their style. If the Taj could really have been the product of an Italian mind, the fact would have constituted the greatest miracle in history. If Hellas had really given birth to an art so unlike her own as the Indian, it would have been the supreme paradox. Hitherto, as he very aptly points out, the European criticism of Indian art has lacked the aid of minds with a thorough artistic training. Art cannot be studied as a side issue of archæology or literature. It is an end and a mode, in and for itself. Only those who are capable of judging of the differences between Greek and Indian art, are competent to discuss what either may owe to the other.

The European pre-conception that India at all times borrows everything from the West, has been unspeakably discouraging to Indian originality and self-respect. The usual movement of ideas like races is from East to West, but, as in the present age so also in the past, there have been back-currents, and reflex trade-routes occasionally, and the development of the child does often, after maturity, influence that of the parent, so that the Hellenic contact is not inconceivable as a powerful factor in Indian evolution. That there was such a contact in the fourth century B. C., is a known historical fact, and its duration and energy, are points that yet remain to be determined, as elements affecting the truth about Indian sculpture.

Mr. Havell thus sums up the historic argument :

"At the beginning of the Christian Era, and for some centuries previously, when the classic art of Europe had already passed its zenith, India was drawing in towards herself a great flood of artistic culture from Western Asia, derived originally from the far-distant sources of Babylon and Assyria, but strongly tinged with the subsidiary stream which was then flowing back into it from Greece and

Rome. Out of these eclectic influences joined with the old indigenous traditions, Indian religious thought quickly formulated a new synthesis of art, which in its turn became the source from which other great currents flowed North, South, East and West.

"In these early centuries of the Christian Era, and from this Indian source, came the inspiration of the great schools of Chinese painting which from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries stood first in the whole world. Successive hordes of Asiatic invaders, beginning with those which flocked like vultures to gather the spoils of the decaying Roman Empire, kept open the high ways between East and West, and brought a reflex to the same traditions into Europe. The influence of India's artistic culture can be clearly traced, not only in Byzantine art, but in the Gothic cathedrals of the middle ages, Europe is very apt to dwell upon the influence of Western art and culture upon Asiatic civilisation, but the far greater influence of Asiatic thought, religion, and culture upon the art and civilisation of Europe is rarely appraised at its proper value.

"From the seaports of her Western and Eastern coasts India at this time also sent streams of colonists, missionaries, and craftsmen all over Southern Asia, Ceylon, Siam, and far distant Kambodia. Through China and Korea Indian art entered Japan about the middle of the sixth century. About A. D. 603 Indian colonists from Gujerat brought Indian art into Java, and at Borobudur in the eighth and ninth centuries, Indian Sculpture achieved its greatest triumphs. Some day, when European art criticism has widened its present narrow horizon, and learnt the foolishness of using the art standards of Greece and Italy as a tape wherewith to measure and appraise the communings of Asia with the Universal and the Infinite, it will grant the nameless sculptors of Borobudur an honourable place amongst the greatest artists the world has ever known."

Full value is here given to any direct influence that Greek art may have had upon Indian. But it will be noticed that even accepting this at its highest estimate the later art of India cannot be accounted for, unless, as here, we postulate those indigenous elements whose vigour and importance made it possible in the earlier period to assimilate foreign influences. This has to be understood, that without a genuine creative faculty of our own, all the art universities of the world would be powerless to make original creator of us. They could make nothing more than images or reflections of creation. The Bharhut scriptures in the Calcutta museum are witness sufficient, to any one who cares to go and see them, of an art which was Indian before the contact of India with classical Europe. Those sculptures themselves probably date from about 150 B. C. No one has ever suggested any Greek influence in them and it is clear that the hands that undertook to work on such a scale in stone had received their previous training in perishable materials like wood and clay. Whatever foreign influences may be brought to bear, the one question of importance, with regard to any art history, is whether or not there was enough native vigour and faculty to result in the eventual assimilation of those influences. Mr. Havell's whole book is a demonstration of the answer to this question, in the case of India.

Our author's next point is one of the great delicacy and significance. Still combating the European idea that India's place in great art is to be marked as absent, he takes up the question of ideals. Sculpture is appraised, in Europe, according to its qualities of physical portraiture. Anatomical and physiological perfection are to it the starting-point of all beauty. "Imitation is the real and only end of all fine art." Really, this last sentence does not do justice to the intention of European art. The Zeus of Olympus and the Moses of Michael Angelo were not imitations of anything in nature. But undoubtedly the notion that "imitation is the real and only end of all fine art" is the *common* conception of Europe to-day, and, is that element in European art which has been grasped by India, in the person of Ravi Varma and his followers.

Mr. Havell boldly sets forth the theorem that Indian sculpture has from the beginning had a totally different ideal. According to him, the Indian artist believes that the highest type of beauty must be sought after, not in the imitation, or selection, of human or natural forms, but in the endeavour to suggest something finer and more subtle than ordinary physical beauty. "When the Indian artist models a representation of the Deity with an attenuated waist and abdomen, and suppresses all the smaller anatomical details, so as to obtain an extreme simplicity of contour, the European declares that he is sadly ignorant of anatomy and incapable of imitating the higher forms of nature. But the Indian artist would create a higher and more subtle type, and suggest that spiritual beauty which, according to his philosophy, can only be richer by the surrender of worldly attachments and the suppression of worldly desires."

This argument, the author carries into considerable detail. The self-controlled man being the Indian spiritual ideal, it is clear that there must be a physical type corresponding to it. And this he finds admirably suggested in that one of the thirty-two principal *lakshanas* (or 'marks of Siva', as they are called, in Modern Bengal) which demands that "the upper part of the body shall be like that of a lion."

As Mr. Havell points out, the most striking characteristic of the Indian lion is its broad, deep shoulders, and narrow contracted abdomen, making it wonderfully analogous to the new spiritualised body which the Indian sculptures aimed at giving Buddha after his enlightenment, "broad-shouldered, deep-chested, golden-coloured, smooth-skinned, supple and lithe as a young lion." In thus going back upon the sources of our greatest creations, and making clear to us our own master ideals, Mr. Havell has rendered an immense service to Indian criticism.

The illustrations of this wonderful volume are unexampled in their variety and interest. India is a country whose attainments can be measured still better by what she has done for others than by what she has kept for herself. It is in the circle of daughter civilisations that we find the surest records of what she has achieved. Our author has been well advised in drawing upon the art of Thibet, Nepal, Ceylon and Java for his examples. Most of those Indians who read his pages will learn, we fear, for the first time, of the Indian Colony who wrought the great temple of Borobudur in Java. If we want to realise the immeasurable difference of spirit between the semi-Greek art of Gandhara, in the first or second century of the Christian Era, and genuine Indian sculpture, secure in conscious possession of its own sources of inspiration we cannot do better than compare the Loriyan Tangai relief of Buddha Preaching with the same as treated at Borobudur. Well may Mr. Havell say that the Indian ideal was never realised in Gandharan art and any one who has visited Gandharan sculptures in the Calcutta Museum and stood face to face with the smart military-looking young men 'who pose uncomfortably there in the attitudes of Indian asceticism', their moustaches touched with all the hairdresser's latest art, will echo his words. There is nothing here of the lofty calm and simplicity of the Buddhas of Magadha; nor is there the spontaneous sweetness and gentleness of the Dhyani Buddha of Borobudur. How gradual is the building up through century after century of those great ideals that later generations are to inherit with their first breath! Well may the writer say, "European art has, as it were, its wings clipped: it knows only the beauty of earthly things. Indian art soaring into the highest empyrean, is ever trying to bring down to earth something of the beauty of the things above."

INDIAN PAINTING

A picture has, properly speaking, two functions, with both of which the cheapness of modern commerce has sadly interfered. One of these is its place in architecture ; the other is its place in the book. The first was developed in India to an extraordinary degree, under the Buddhistic civilisations of the first thousand years of the Christian Era. The second was equally highly developed under the auspices of the Mogul dynasty of Delhi. In both cases, the basis on which a great art was reared, is still extant. In any village, or on the old river-boats, we may see the rude mural decorations, processions of horses, dogs and elephants, or pictures of tiger-hunts, or marriage ceremonies, all interspersed with sterns and scrolls, and half-geometrical flowers,—out of which grew the noble works of Ajanta, and Sigiriya in Ceylon. In every province, despite paint-boxes, filled with horrible aniline dyes, linger the old school artists, with their bazar-pictures, so reminiscent of a glory that has passed.

Modern easel-painting is a compromise between these two functions. The picture of to-day aims at illustrating a single moment in a sustained intellectual conception, epic or natural, like the book-illustration. But it attempts to combine with this, the grandeur and breadth of wall-painting. It is more or less large, and yet it is detachable. In actual book-illustration, the thirst after perfection of the old masters has now been modified by considerations of easy mechanical reproduction, till specimens of the old work have become like precious jewels, to be sought after with eagerness and rarely found.

There can be no doubt that there is a great future in India for mural painting. The large halls of assembly that the coming era of nationality and democracy will popularise,—for purposes of education and of the civic life,—will all demand decoration, and undoubtedly that decoration will take the form of painting to a great extent. This painting will have three different subjects, the national ideals, the national history, and the national life. Amongst these shadows of noble thought, the men and women of the future will grow up. Against such a back-ground, a constantly grander civic life will be moulded.

These village-halls, in which the deepening political consciousness of the future will find expression, have had their prototypes in India, in the chaitya-halls of the Buddhist *viharas* by means of which, as Mr. Havell very lucidly points out, one of the great world-schools has been developed in art.

"The universities of ancient India, like those of Taksashila, near the modern Peshawar, Nalanda in Bengal, and Sridhanya Kataka (Amaravati) on the banks of the Krishna, comprised schools of religious painting and sculpture and in these great culture-centres of India all foreign artistic ideas gradually transformed by Indian thought, and nationalised.

"From them, also, the Indian art thus created radiated all over Asia in the great epoch dating from about the first century B. C. down to about the eighth century of our era. No doubt it was these schools that India owed the paintings of Ajanta as well as the sculptures of Amaravati, Ellora, and Elephanta.

"The early Buddhist records contain many allusions to 'pictures halls', which were no doubt the halls of monasteries painted with sacred subjects, like those of the sculpture galleries already described ; or paintings on the walls of garden quadrangles, protected by verandahs such as are commonly attached to royal palaces were used as picture-galleries even in recent times ; before Indian art fell into utter disrepute."

Undoubtedly it was the existence of the great chaitya-halls,—used as these were, in the Buddhist abbeys, for monastic chapters, general councils, worship, and university purposes, that occasioned the rise of the magnificant schools of Indian painting, whose remains we still find, in the caves of Ajanta.

It is clear, also, that such paintings must have been executed by members of the Orders residing in the monastery itself, in the same way that the Dominican Convent of San Marco outside Florence has been decorated, by the hand of Fra Angelico. There can be no doubt that it was the monks themselves who spent their talent and energy in building, sculpturing or painting the ancient viharas. This was the contribution of certain members to the common good. They required no reward for their services, beyond maintenance and the active sympathy and encouragement of their fellows. It is for this reason that monastic orders have always been able to do memorable work, in whatever direction they have applied themselves.

" The period covered by the religious paintings of Ajanta", says Mr. Havell, "extends from about the second or first centuries before Christ to about the seventh century of our era, or over most of the great epoch of Indian art which has been reviewed in the previous chapters. Unfortunately, owing in a great measure to neglect and ill-treatment these beautiful paintings have lost their original charm of colour, and are so damaged otherwise as to be at present only pitiable wrecks of what they have been. We can see in the best Ajanta paintings, especially in those of the caves numbered 16 or 17, the same intense love the nature of spiritual devotion as are evident in the sculptures of Borobudur."

From the fragments published in the work of Mr. John Griffiths on Ajanta, it would seem that this combination of artistic ideals Hellenic and mediæval Catholic, was the most remarkable feature of the Ajanta pictures. But Mrs. C. I. Herringham, a distinguished art-critic who has seen them lately for the first time, has stated in England that their most striking distinction lies in their delineation of state-ceremonials and processions, and in the ease with which the artists discriminate between persons of low and of noble race,—powers that the art of Europe, as she points out had not yet acquired, in the time of Giotto, five hundred years later.

It is to the gem-like works of the court-painters of the Mogul period and after, that Mr. Havell has been obliged to go, for the bulk of his illustration of Modern Indian painting. The charming "Circle of travellers round a camp-fire," which he gives as a specimen of the work of unknown artists to-day, has evidently suffered in reproduction. The lights are too defined, the touch too hard. Yet it is a typical Indian scene. If only Indian men and women were prepared to buy such works, there would be more produced. The artist has felt the thrill of the midnight scene under the trees: the hushed voices, the half-veiled woman listening in the doorway to the tale told in the flickering firelight, the sense of converging roads, of the parting, never again to meet, that the dawn will bring.

When we realise that it is our own want of culture that prevents our selecting and buying such pictures as this, we are able better to understand the depth of education that characterised the women of the Mogul Court when they collected some of the priceless manuscripts to be seen in the Khuda Bukhsh Library at Bankipore. It was the Queen Arzmand Banu—to whom afterwards the Taj was built—who spent 40,000 Rupees to buy, for her husband's birth-day, the illuminated book that bears his signature. In great ages, woman is always educated, always competent, and often literary. Her ignorance marks the on-coming of national decadence.

Nothing could better illustrate at once the likeness and difference of the Mogul and the modern styles of painting, than a comparison between such pictures as the portrait of Sadi and Mr. A. Tagore's illustration for Omar Khayyam.

There is a marvellous quality of truthfulness and imagination in the Mogul portraits. But the modern sets himself to convey the *mental* atmosphere of his subject. He so paints a man—seated on a roof, at sunrise,—that we follow him into his very dreams.

Sadi also a poet, painted with book in hand, and intensity of thought upon his face. But this Omar seems to melt away into his own reverie.

The fault of the old painters may have been a leaning towards too great severity: the fault of the moderns is a tenderness and sentiment that approaches sometimes too near the verge of weakness.

There is no weakness in the final picture of the modern school, reproduced by Mr. Havell.

Whatever we may think historically of the Flight of Lakshman Sen in 1203, before the Mahomedans,—and I for one do not accept a word of the current nonsense that would make of him a coward!—this picture by Babu Surendra Nath Ganguly, is magnificent, strong, nervous, full of energy and vigour. The escape of a discrowned king speaks in every line. We could have named it, had there been no title. And after all, is not the moment portrayed, one of promise, if also of regret? Sadness for the occasion, promised for the art? The picture speaks of both. The boat waits by the palace-steps. But—the door is left open, and in the grim determination of the face of the fugitive king, hope still lives! It is a moment of withdrawal rather than flight. In some remote fastness of his kingdom, Lakshman Sen will still live and reign. When the hour strikes, he will return again!

SHAH JAHAN DREAMING OF THE TAJ

The last reflection of the sunset has not yet died out of the eastern sky. The young moon is high behind the clouds. And the Emperor rides alone by the river-side to pray. Weeks, perhaps months, have gone by, since that terrible moment of severance, when the two who were as one, were divided for a time. The heart still quivers, under the freshness of the wound; and yet serenity is at its dawn; within the soul we behold the meeting-place of pain and peace. Yonder, on the far side of the river, lies a grave, her grave. O flowing stream! O little tomb! How icy-cold to-night, is this tent of the heart! Awhile hence, when the moon is gone, and all the world is wrapped in secrecy, Shah Jahan will ride across the ford, and there dismount, to kneel beneath the marble canopy, and kiss, with passionate kisses, those cold stones, that silent earth, that are as the hem of her garment to him who loves. Awhile hence, despair and longing will have overwhelmed him. But now, he prays. With all the gravity and stateliness of a Mohammedan sovereign, he paces up and down on horseback, head bowed, hands quiet on the reins, and lost in thought. The healing hand of his own strong religious faith has begun to make itself felt, in the man's life. The gleam of white marble speaks to him of rest. A throne could not lift her who is gone, as she is lifted in this shrine of death. How far has she been removed, above all the weariness and pain, the turbulance and mischance, of this mortal world! The soul that came to him out of the infinite, like a great white bird, bearing love and compassion on its wings is withdrawn once more into the bosom of God. The presence of this dust is in truth a conversation. The lamp of the home is extinguished, but burns there not a light the more, before the altar? The wife, the mother, the queen, is gone, but in heaven there kneels a saint before God, praying to Him for her beloved on earth.

THE PASSING OF SHAH JAHAN*

It happens to a few lives that they are filled with a certain quality of dramatic fitness. They appear to reap the harvest of many births. The jewel and its setting have, in every case that concerns them, a strange harmony. Pre-eminently was this the case with Shah Jahan. The turbulent young soldier becomes the Emperor of Delhi, and nothing is wanting to the glory of his reign. Successful general, unrivalled administrator, wealthiest of monarchs, he does not fail, either of more subtle and finer joys more often granted to men of lower station. Shah Jahan, Emperor of all India, is also hero nevertheless of one of the supreme marriage-idylls of the world. All that he can give, has not prevented a woman from yielding to him her disinterested devotion. And as if even this were too little, there is given to him the still rare gift of immortal song in honour of the beloved. For are the buildings and cities that his genuis has left—dedicated to Arzmand Banu, his wife and to India, Goddess and Mother,—not a poem sung in marble by the lips of a sovereign ? Never verily in the history of the world, did any single monarch build like this. And never one who was not enamoured and enrapt of a passion for the land he ruled.

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* This and the Dreaming of the Taj are subjects of picture by Mr. Abanindra Nath Tagore.

Yet that the great life may indeed be perfect, we have no monotony of splendour and success. The sad minor mingles with the music. To joyous courtship succeeds long widowhood. On brilliant empire supervenes the seven-years' imprisonment. He, before whom the whole world bowed, is thankful and proud to win at last the long-sweet faith and service of a single daughter prison-cell ! What were the memories and what prisoncell ! What were the memories and what the hopes, that thronged the shadows in which Shah Jahan spent those last long years ?

Here is the end.

At his own earnest entreaty as they tell to this day in Agra Fort, the bed of the dying man has been carried to the balcony beyond the

Jasmine Tower, that over-hangs the river. Jahanara weeps at her father's feet. All others have withdrawn, for no service remains to be rendered to the august captive. On the edge of the carpet lie only the shoes and regal helmet, put off for the last time. For Shah Jahan, the uses of the world are ended. Silence and night and the mourning moon, half-veiled in her scarf of drifting cloud, envelop the sad soul of the gentle princess.

But Shah Jahan himself ?—To him the moment is glad with expectation. The sucking sound of the river below the bastions fills him with the sense of that other river beside which stands his soul. Ponder, beyond the bend, like some ethereal white-veiled presence, stands the Taj,—*her* taj, her crown, the crown he wrought her. But to-night it is more than her crown. To-night, it is herself. To-night she is there, in all her old time majesty and sweetness, yet with an added holiness withal. To-night, beyond the gentle lapping of the waters, every line of the stately form speaks tenderness and peace and all-enfolding holiness, waiting for that pilgrim—with weary feet, bent back, and head so bowed, alas !—who comes, leaving behind alike palace and prison, battlefield and cell of prayer, to land on the quiet shore on the yonder side of death.

Truly a royal passing—this of Shah Jahan ! King in nothing so truly as in his place in a woman's heart—crowned in this, the supreme moment, of her to whom he gave the Crown of all the world.

SATI

Had the painter of this picture been a European, we should unquestionably have had the subject presented to us as a fine-looking woman, drawn to her full height, and facing the spectators in a mingling of beauty and triumph. Nothing could be more significant of the distinctive character of Indian feeling, however, that the way in which Mr. Nanda Lall Bose has here set himself to approach the idea. We see before us a woman, beautiful indeed, and adorned like a bride, with her whole mind set on the moment of triumph, yet without the slightest consciousness of her own glory. The form is pure *sattva,* without one particle of *rajas,* as the Indian thinker might express it. The spire-like flames leap up. She kneels throned on a summit of fire. Yet there is no fear. No farewell sob is mingled with her praying. Her eyes see nothing—neither the flames beneath, nor the loved ones she is leaving—nothing at all, save the sacred form of him whom she is about to rejoin. Her mind is quiet, flooded with peace. The moment is one of union. She knows nothing of separation.

In this perfect fearlessness, this absence of any self-consciousness, what a witness we find to the Indian Conception of the Glory of Woman! What other lands have done in the name of the great causes,—for faith, for freedom, for the right of knowledge,—was here done, a thousand times more commonly, out of the sweet tenderness of the home. Well may the women who have done this thing be worshipped by their descendants for all time. And certain is it that in the race that has borne them, there courage and high fealty can never die, but remain hidden, not again to be used in this form truly, but to find now utterance and fresh expression in the world-shaking crises of future ages. From the cloistered wifehood of the old Indian home to the martyr-death of the Great Saint—was it not in truth a path of glory, on which each footprint should receive our salutation?